

Application No. 09/956,972 —
Reply to Notice of Allowance of March 9, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the previously disclosed references in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

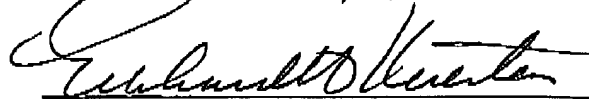
The Office Action of October 6, 2003 stated that the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 21, 2001 failed to comply with 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(3) as failing to include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37 C.F.R. §1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent listed that is not in the English language. However, Applicants respectfully submit that a Statement of Relevancy was included with the IDS submitted September 21, 2001, as evidenced by the enclosed copy of the date stamped filing receipt. A copy of the previously submitted Statement of Relevancy is also included herewith.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Information Disclosure Statement filed September 21, 2001 does comply with 37 C.F.R. §1.98(a)(3), and respectfully request that the cited references be considered with respect to the present application.

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance over all the cited references. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Eckhard H. Kuesters
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 28,870

Customer Number

22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413-2220
(OSMMN 08/03)
I:\ATTY\ET\214253US\214253US-REQ.DOC

BEST AVAILABLE COPY